PASS ON PAMPHLETS. No. 4.
Id.

Why Women Want Socialism.

JULIA DAWSON.

THE CLARION PRESS.
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WHY WOMEN WANT SOCIALISM

By JULIA DAWSON.

THERE is a tiny wee plant of Virginia creeper which I have transplanted with more or less great expectations from one garden to another, three times.

It is some years since—with grand memories of its former glories on the old red wall—I put it in the sheltered corner it now occupies. But, somehow or other, it never grows but a few inches high. At that stage it

"Stops short, never to go again,"

like grandfather's clock in the one-time popular song.

I went to look at this little pet creeper this morning. It is May, you must know, and the garden is beginning to glory things up. The red geraniums are out, with more buds waiting to open. The bluebells lie like a bit of heaven on the brown earth beneath the big tree. Peonies and irises are painting the black tarred fence in purple and red, and everything is flourishing, except that one bit of creeper.

It is really funny—or would be if it were not pathetic. It holds out its trembling little five-fingered hands, pink-tipped like a baby's, as to say: "You know I can never grow. I never have since you tore me down from the old red wall, where I could stretch my limbs as far as I liked. Here the ivy gets in my way horribly: and no sooner does the sun get hot enough to feel than the southern-wood puts out its leaves right in front. There's the chrysanthemum, too, which never can

bloom till my last and loveliest red leaves are dying —spreads and spreads its great stalks everywhere, till I cannot breathe. They mean well, and look very nice, these other things. But they fairly choke me and make it impossible for me to grow any bigger than I am now."

"Sweet dear," I respond, full of compassion, "I put you there in that corner because it was sheltered from the winds, and was most *particularly* careful to put those tall plants by you to keep you from harm. But now I see you are practically being

PROTECTED TO DEATH.

Things I thought were for your good have proved to your injury. Your roots are too deep now for me to pull up by myself. But some day I will get the others interested in you, and we'll transplant you again, right out into the open, where your life will be FREE. Then you will grow as never before —not even on the old red wall, for there you remember the old wretch of a pear-tree, which made a great show of blossom, though as barren of fruit as my hand, was very masterful."

"Yes, I know," replied the creeper. "I never liked to say anything. But I often wondered you never noticed it."

With which rebuke I departed, leaving just the little bit of hope in the heart of that creeper which keeps it alive from year to year.

Now, when asked to write a pamphlet on

WHY WOMEN WANT SOCIALISM,

it seems to me that creeper gives the best answer that can be found.

We women want Socialism because, in order to grow beyond the ignorant, downtrodden, "weaker sex" we now are, we must be FREE.

At present we live in such a tangle of thorns and roses (I am not denying the roses!) that we cannot grow. We have not room. Socialism will lift us out of the jungle, and set our feet out upon

THE OPEN ROAD.

There we shall be happy and free, as different from what we are now in our outlook, our prospects, our

everything, as a caged lark differs from one that is used to winging and singing its way to heaven.

Socialism will change our environment entirely. Scarce anything, except our families and friends we have around us now, will be around us then. This in itself ought to fill us with delight. For how many things, other than human kinships (not that they are always exempt), can be said now to give such undiluted joy that they are incapable of improvement?

The butterfly-women may have a very good time now, as "good times" with them go. But others who use their brains, and have flowing in their veins the warm blood of wide sympathy, know that never a pleasure is without its pain: and never a bee brings honey which cannot also sting—and is often only too ready to do so on the slightest pretext.

Socialism will remove—not all stings—but most. What pain it inflicts will be that pleasure may come after: and not pain upon pain to no purpose, but more pain, which present conditions of life impose upon us now.

An instance, you ask?

I will give you plenty of instances before I have done. I will sum up, in fact, at the end of this pamphlet such a list of

WOMEN'S WRONGS

which Socialism would put right as will give you pause, and lead you to read every reliable book upon Socialism that has ever been written, in order that you may see for yourself how easily, how naturally, Socialism would remove the wrongs, not of women only, but of all humanity.

For practically all *real* suffering is preventible. That suffering is not real which is endured for some good reason, as when a man's back aches with grubbing weeds and sowing corn, or a woman's pains are severe before she may put on the

CROWN OF WOMANHOOD—MOTHERHOOD.

The real suffering is the exasperating kind which is inflicted unnecessarily, as when children go hungry to school while there is food for all and to

spare, or when a genius wants to cultivate his gifts, and cannot "afford," though a brilliant son of the richest country in the world.

Most of our troubles come, not because they are inevitable, but because they are the children of other troubles which ought never to have been permitted to have arisen, and which *could not arise* under Socialism.

Think of the way we women housekeepers are worried to make ends meet. Think of the pains we endure because of our poverty. To many of us life is a perpetual anxiety—how the next baby is going to be provided for—where the money is coming from for the rent, shopping, etc.

Many of us, too, are worn out and sent into premature graves through overwork, overstrain that we have to bear, because we are short of the one and only means of easing it—money.

Under Socialism, this state of things will be impossible. There will be no money troubles, because we shall all have enough. This means that we shall not need to suffer privations, or to endure any other of the hundred-and-one hardships which want of money forces upon us now.

Think of that!

For Socialism is a system of JUSTICE.

Poverty, when you look down deep enough to see where it comes from, is so absurd in a rich country like ours that the only wonder is that we have tolerated it so long.

If you sit still and wonder long enough, though, you will see why it is not only tolerated, but encouraged. It is necessary to the well-being of the over-rich that there should be over-poor, and that they should be kept under thumb.

This is why, instead of taking any

ROCK-BOTTOM MEASURES

of eradicating poverty, such as giving the workers their full earnings, they resort to "charity." For keeping poor folk "under" nothing is so effective as that.

If they gave them justice, instead, it would necessarily mean that they would have to part with much

of that they possess now; for what rich man in the world can say he has earned, or is morally entitled to, his riches?

Socialism will set all these things right: and just as women suffer most now by poverty—theirs being the task to feed and clothe and nurse—so, under Socialism, they will benefit most by the plenty which will be within the reach of all.

At no time in her life, perhaps, does a woman suffer from poverty so acutely as when she is about to become a mother. What the poorest women of all go through at such times would not bear printing.

Just when they want love, sympathy, kindness, and care to help them to bear, they are bereft of every one of these things. In their miserable homes there is not even a bed to spare, let alone a private room. So they have to beg and pray to be taken into some "charitable" institution. There they go at the last minute (being sent back home again often if it is not quite the last minute) and have the agonising anxiety all the while they are "in" that things are going "all wrong" at home: husband getting drunk to drown his miseries, children hungry and neglected, and perhaps in danger by fire, running into the street, etc., etc.

The conditions under which poor mothers have babies in this country is shameful to a degree; enough, if the women thought deeply enough, to make them go on strike against maternity.

Socialism would alter all this. Under Socialism the Mother and Child would be honoured *before everything else on earth.* Instead of a birth in a family being a calamity, as it is often considered now, it would always be a matter for rejoicing. For, under Socialism, all women will be honoured and all children loved.

Motherhood is Beautiful.

So beautiful, that the Mother and Child are worshipped first, or supposed to be, in most religions even before Christianity. And maternity is not a hard thing, but easy, to a woman who has the requisite amount of care and freedom from anxiety. It is the complex, maddening, discouraging, and

disgraceful conditions of modern life with which poor mothers have to contend. These cry out for the

SWORD OF SOCIALISM

to cut all those great plants down which stand between us women and the sun, and keep us in the shade as effectively as the southern-wood and chrysanthemum stifle my Virginia creeper.

By itself the chrysanthemum is all right—even beautiful. All that is wrong is that it is not in its proper place. If our garden were planned on scientific, sensible, *Socialist* lines—to give everything a fair chance of growing—that chrysanthemum would be put somewhere else. But, alas! it is neglected. We are all too busy with other things, and so the strong crush the weak, and there is no such thing as Justice for All anywhere.

So in that much bigger garden, our great country. Instead of its industry being conducted on sound, scientific lines so that the wealth earned can be justly apportioned, it is a case of each one looking after himself and the devil taking the hindmost. All waste and confusion, some having too many of the good things of life, others not half enough.

The rich employers of labour are excellent, clever men, of whose intellect and general administrative capacity the country has a right to be proud, just as we are proud of our chrysanthemums. But the mischief is, these men and our chrysanthemums are in the wrong place. They keep the sun off other things, *though the sun is big enough to shine on all.*

Do you understand, you women who read these lines? I do not know how to put it more plainly. To me, it is simple as A B C that every wrong we suffer Socialism will put right.

* * * * *

Now, it is not easy to say exactly

HOW TO GET SOCIALISM,

or what Socialism will do for women when we do get it. When a canary is in a cage he does not know how he will get out, nor what he will do when he does get out. But if you who keep him behind gilded bars and are enraptured with his singing,

were to meet him, say a year after, on a tree-top in the Hartz Mountains, you would not know him: his song would be so much sweeter and his feathers so much finer. He never could dream in his cage about a tenth of the glories of freedom and the natural life, because they were outside the realm of even his wildest imagination.

It is possible, also, for one canary to dream one thing and another another: and for both to be wrong—or both right.

Some women Socialists likewise dream one thing and others another. Some look to Socialism to free them from what they call the

TYRANNY OF MAN

(though they marry men). I have a book before me now in which the writer gravely says:

"The raising of women to the present position of men would be a revolution as great in its character, and as important in its consequences, as the destruction of the present social and industrial system, and the establishment upon its ruin of the new social order."

Now, as another woman Socialist, I cannot believe that. Men are not so well off these days that women need to take any trouble whatsoever, in my opinion, to be in their position.

The same writer, speaking again of Votes for Women further on, says:

"The question is so foundational in its character that upon its satisfactory solution depends the satisfactory solution, ultimately, of all other problems. . . . The political enfranchisement of women must precede the establishment of Socialism. The raising of women to the present position of men would be a great step in the direction of Socialism, and would be a change as revolutionary and far-reaching in its effects as the nationalisation of the land, mines, and railways."

But I cannot for one moment place the importance of

WOMEN'S FRANCHISE

alongside so noble and grand a scheme as the destruction of the present wicked social and indus-

trial system, and the building upon its ruins of a better social order, nor even on a par with such splendid and far-reaching reforms as the nationalisation of the land, railways, mines, etc. The nationalisation of the land, for instance, might conceivably do away with slums: and the nationalisation of mines might conceivably give fires to those too poor to buy coal at the price charged by the present private owners of collieries. But votes for women would not be any more likely to do this than votes for men have done.

Of course, we women feel the humiliation of our present political and economic disabilities, bitterly. But we must guard against crying out against them like spoilt children, and against saying things from the emotional depths of our righteous indignation, that in our sober senses we must know to be untrue; or, as Mark Twain said of the report of his death, "slightly exaggerated." If mere votes would give women all they want, then why are there any men now starving and unemployed? Driven to crime to get even prison shelter? Drinking themselves to a condition worse than beasts to drown their miseries?

The agitation for votes for women (in so far as it agitates for votes for *all* women), is an admirable one, in which we should all join heartily. But we must not let it carry away our sense of proportion.

More important than votes, for instance, is *knowledge*. Once get all the women to know how they suffer under present conditions, and how under Socialism they would be happy and free, then they will demand Socialism. And as soon as women demand anything at all, they will get it.

Votes will not necessarily give them this knowledge. Votes have not apparently made men any wiser than they were before they had them. Nor have places, nor have power, or John Burns would not be so disappointing. But knowledge *will* make us wiser. And when we are so wise that none can withstand us—why, none *will* withstand us!

The greatest hindrance to progress is ignorance. We women are only where we are now, because we do not know that we could be and ought to be somewhere else.

We put up with poverty because we do not know that riches are ours for the asking: with slavery, because we do not know how easily we can be free, and all sorts of other ills, because in our ignorance we believe they are unavoidable.

Soon as we know that all these troubles can be removed by Socialism, then we shall get Socialism. There will be no keeping us quiet until we *do* get it. So let us, in this little pamphlet, look into things that are, and need not be: *some* things. A pamphlet could not contain them all.

If I begin about our

SUBJECTION TO MEN,

do not please class me among the army of women who have gained some notoriety as "anti-man-ers." For, to tell the honest truth, I love men as well as women, every bit. That is what comes, perhaps, of being married to a man, and knowing him somewhat intimately, as well as having hosts of man friends. Those women who get angry at what they call "man-made laws," and blame them for the position in which man finds himself now, namely, one of authority over women—do not, so to speak, live up my street. Laws, in my opinion, are not so much "man-made," as matters of evolution. If the truth were known, probably, women have had as much to do with the making of most laws as men. For though women are wise as serpents, they are not always harmless as doves.

We are passing through a period when

MAN IS STRUTTING

his little hour upon the stage. Maybe, woman will strut *her* little hour, too, in the future. That we cannot tell. But certain it is that as evolution progresses towards the perfect, men and women will—*strut together!* There will be no talk, then, about man-made laws or woman-made laws. For laws will be framed *by* the community *for* the community: and the word "sex" of which we are so heartily sick now, will scarce ever be mentioned.

Man is in the position of "lord" now. But far be it from me to say he has sought it particularly, or that he specially enjoys it. If I were a man, in

fact, and thought I was responsible *really* for the condition of things that exists now in what ought to be "Merrie England," I should be so miserable and ashamed that I would hide in a hole and never come out again. And the probability is he would do the same. So do not be too hard upon men. They are merely the victims of circumstances—and, considering all things, have not behaved so badly as they might have done.

We will take first that most important of all things in women's lives, LOVE. The thing you know that makes the world go round; and without which the world actually would stand still.

Just think how women are made to suffer by that most natural and urgent of all instincts, and how men go scot free. I think it was Madame de Staël who said "love with a man is an episode, with woman a history." And someone else has added that love is of man's life a thing apart, but a woman's whole existence.

Under our present system if a woman loves not wisely but too well, her life is at once turned from light to darkness, but the man's halo remains on his head. Where once she took her walks abroad, with eyes bright, cheeks rosy, and everybody smiled at her coming, after loving not wisely, she fares forth pale as famine, and as though she were a pestilence in the land people avoid her, spit upon her to keep away. When she goes to bed at night lonely and neglected there comes a sound from her heart like the wail of the last Hope that left earth, while his sleep is undisturbed. Only women know to the full the tale of this tragedy which is enacted every day—and among all classes.

This state of things exists owing to many reasons, but at the real root of all is the poverty which prevents marriage, and the unnatural lives young men and maidens have to live which produce unnatural passions. Under Socialism this danger would be so minimised that it could scarcely exist. And, when such a tragedy did occur as an unmarried mother, the State would take care of that mother as well as all others.

Next to Love, perhaps it is fitting to take the

natural outcome of Love, for women—Maternity. Under present conditions, married mothers are made to suffer almost as much as the unmarried. In some cases more.

Under Socialism every mother and child will be cared for. The State will make allowances for women and children, holding the just view that if a woman bears children she does her duty without earning wages as well, and should receive her reward. Then, it follows naturally, that the children born will be reared healthy and strong. Mothers will be so taken care of before, during, and after confinement, that the children they bring into the world will be of *use* to the world, and not as happens so sinfully often now, born just to put somebody to the expense of a funeral.

Miss Margaret McMillan, who is not only a woman Socialist, but the children's Saviour, declares that thirty per cent. of the infants who die prematurely, do so because they are prematurely born.

A professional nurse who took tea with me yesterday, told me that a sickening percentage of women and children died through inattention at confinements.

A Woman in Child-Bed

now runs the risk of getting just as much attention as she can pay for, and no more. The nice-looking women that we see going about in saintly nurses' uniform are by no means all saints. Some of them are as hard-hearted and callous as stone. They have taken up that profession because it "pays." Under Socialism women will not be driven into occupations and professions for which they have neither sympathy nor capacity in order to live—and nurses and doctors above all others who hold human lives in the hollow of their hand will be chosen only because of their special fitness for such grave responsibilities.

Whereas pregnant poor women now have to face the

Gates of Death

every time a baby is born, under Socialism they will be opening the gates of life.

If Socialism did only this, it would practically revolutionise the lives of women.

Economic Dependence.

Socialism would render women economically independent of men, so that a woman would have no need whatsoever to marry—often somebody they do not care for half enough to sacrifice a life-time for—in order to get a home and be "settled." Socialism would make provision for all except the wilfully lazy, and uncertain source of income would no longer be a menace to the happiness of either women or men.

Socialism would *save the children.* Whereas they now die, in Englaid alone, I think, at the rate of 120,000 a year before they are a year old, owing to preventible causes mostly, such as neglect, unhygienic conditions of birth, impoverished mothers, etc. Socialism would specialise on children and make it as impossible for unhealthy children to be born, even in factory districts—(if there are any factory districts, which I hope there will not be)—as it is impossible for healthy children to be born now.

Enforced celibacy, which acts almost as disastrously on women as men, resulting in suicide, lunacy, physical and mental degeneracy, etc., will be abolished by Socialism. When wars cease to devastate, and male babies live, marriages will increase abundantly, and there will be no reason other than want of inclination for not marrying. Prostitution, by which so many women have to live lives of shame and misery will also be unknown—under Socialism.

Women will be able to keep their children in their homes, instead of sending them into the workhouse to be fed, in the factory to lose their childhood, or in the army to fight. For Socialism will have no need for workhouses, since there will be no paupers. No need for child-earnings since adults will earn enough. No need to fight and kill, since one of the strongest planks in its platform is International Peace. Socialism is not spreading in England alone. It would be little good if it did. It is

making progress everywhere—and the Brotherhood of Man will soon be an accomplished fact.

Socialism will abolish poverty. Easily! People are not poor now because there is no wealth, but because it is unevenly divided. Out of the 43 million people of Great Britain about five million receive half the annual income of the country. The 38 million left naturally have to go short. Socialism will not tolerate such injustice and inequality.

Food will all be wholesome and pure. No adulterated flour to make the bread heavy after a hard day's baking. No lack of nourishment to rob woman of strength and give them invalids to nurse. No competition between between trades' folk which results in things sold being cheap and nasty. Under Socialism they will still be cheap, cheaper than now —for competition is an expensive luxury—and they will all be *as good as can be grown or manufactured.* Women won't buy flannels then which, after being carefully made up will shrink in the wash and become hard as boards, nor any spurious "imitations" like flannelette. Nor will they buy sized cotton and pay for linen. Competition, which tempts tradesmen to practice all these deceits in order to make profits, will be abolished, and co-operation will reign in its stead. Instead of it paying a man to produce something "cheap" and profitable as now, it will pay him better to produce something wholesome and useful. This will make such a difference in the

DOMESTIC WORK AND WORRIES

of women that they will scarcely know where they are.

Socialism will provide good homes for all, with plenty of conveniences. No slums, courts, and alleys, but *homes*, sweet and spacious. Such beautiful homes we shall have, even we ordinary women, that no public-house will be able to vie with them. No husband will be tempted to go to the gin-shops as they are now for comfort and brightness. Our homes will be better than any gin-shops that ever were.

Not only will they be bigger and better in every

way than those we live in now. They will make less work. Homes under Socialism will be built for comfort and convenience, and not to yield so much rent for any money-grubbing landlord, as it the case now.

The woman at home, though her husband be what we should now call "only a scavenger," would not be a drudge. Under Socialism a scavenger will be considered, and rightly, too, as important as a solicitor—and a scavenger's wife will hold up her head just as high.

Not that Socialism will think

More of Scavengers

necessarily than, say, of silversmiths, but it will honour all men and all women who do *useful* work, and treat them handsomely. It will give them homes, not mere workshops. Mothers under Socialism will not be the household drudges they are now.

A well-known man in the Socialist movement, with a bonny wife and several children whom he could only see once a week, said to me that he hated his home. It was a place which exacted the maximum of labour for the minimum of comfort; and but that he wanted to see his wife and return his children's kisses he would never go home any more. It made him so mad.

This can easily be understood. He is a sympathetic man. He knows—what few men can ever bring themselves to learn—that in order to keep a home in good order a woman with five children, even if she keeps a "help," leads a life of endless drudgery.

This is the reason why so many children are only called "good" by mothers when they are "quiet." If, child-like, their inquiring young minds begin to ask questions when there are bedrooms to sweep, dinners to be cooked, and ironing to be done, the mother is too busy to answer them, sends them away, and calls them "naughty."

Have you ever thought how accustomed the English child with the busy mother and working father is to the words "Don't" and "Mustn't"?

Last week I came home from Blackpool in a train

with a respectable working man and his five-year-old daughter, an interesting child, with a new red velvet frock trimmed with cream lace. She looked happy at first. I noticed her red frock, and how carefully she used her handkerchief to wipe her hands after the chocolate my daughter had given her. She folded it up into a square each time she put it into her pocket. The father was quietly proud to see us taking such pleasure in the rosy cheeks and frank blue eyes of his girl. She had new boots on, too. And she was very, very happy—until, having finished her chocolate, she wanted to turn her pocket out again, to rub her new boots one against the other, to look out of the window, and to steal her little fat red hand under her father's arm. She was *alive*, in fact, and wanted to *move*. At all these things he shook his head severely and said "Don't" or "Mustn't," till by-and-bye the child's eyes filled with silent tears and looked up at him as if she really would like to know the reason why she mustn't do *any*thing, but dare not ask so formidable a personage!

He had nothing to do in the train, really, but answer any questions she might like to put, or show her things through the window. But his only thought of good behaviour for that child was to keep her quiet. And he did. But Dolly and I will never forget her pathetic face with its wistful tears as long as we live.

Socialism will consider children of more importance than dusting of rooms and cooking of dinners. Socialists say that children need mothering and fathering; and that if mothers especially go through the pains of child-birth they are entitled to the pleasures in which mother-love finds its consolation.

So, instead of the awful waste which goes on in housework now, by a hundred fires being lighted to cook a hundred dinners, etc., as Nunquam points out in *Merrie England*, it will so organise household work that no one woman will have the burden of a whole house to look after, and the cleaning, cooking, mending, and general "doing for" a whole family.

Experts will come into our homes to do the cleaning as regularly as we get our drains flushed by the local authorities now, and a good deal oftener. Our meals will be cooked by the very best cooks that can be trained, in one big co-operative kitchen for so many families, so that the heaviest and dirtiest part of all housework, namely, cooking and washing-up, will be entirely done away with in private houses. Likewise the washing: instead of women standing all day in steamy wash-houses while their children are crying, the public van will come from the public wash-house and bring back the linen in snowy piles, washed, ironed, and aired, all ready to put on. No drying of clothes then in dirty little back yards, or general upset of the house which washing-day involves. This burden alone lifted off women's backs is enough to make them cry Hallelujah for Socialism!

Just think of all the splendid laundry machinery invented and lying idle, waiting for "customers," while in a street of fifty houses fifty women are breaking their backs, ruining their tempers, and neglecting their children in order for each to do one family's washing. Cruel is not the word—it is criminal.

As you are women who read this pamphlet, and I am a woman who writes it, believe me, Socialism is above all things the *friend of women.* Aye, and Socialism will require things of us women. For, though it will help us in thousands of ways, it will not go so far as to sap our sense of responsibility and leave us nothing to do. On the other hand, it will place our responsibilities upon our shoulders for us to *undertake!* Just as the present system takes from us the things we ought to do and gives in their place things we ought never to dream of doing, such as putting our children in day nurseries and giving us rags to pick or machines to mind instead, so Socialism will open wide the door inside which all our *real* work lies waiting to be done.

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One Penny.

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NO. 2.—JOHN BULL AND DOCTOR FREE TRADE.
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By Julia Dawson.
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